

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **A Message from the DMHSA – Prevention and Training Branch: Empowering for a Suicide-Safer Island**

**Hagåtña, Guam** – The following message was released in behalf of DMHSA-Prevention and Training Branch supervisor, Bobbie S.N. Benavente:

It is a sad time on Guam to hear that we lost another one of our community members, one of our soldiers, to suicide. This tragedy calls upon all of us to be carefully observant and be more knowledgeable about how the people around us are doing. We can learn how we each can be trained to become suicide prevention caregivers – it is possible to stop suicide and suicide attempts on Guam. To do this, we must each reach out for help when we ourselves feel helpless, hopeless and overwhelmed, and also help others who appear to be troubled and in need of support. We, together, can stop suicide.

On Guam, we lose someone to suicide at a rate of one every two weeks. We are all directly or indirectly affected by these deaths. We have become survivors of these losses and thus it becomes our inherent responsibility to be involved in suicide prevention. Everyone can learn to create an environment and develop a personal relationship with others that allow for open and honest discussions about personal feelings and events that are tough to deal with in their lives. ***With help, there's hope.***

Know the signs when a person may be thinking or planning to take their lives. Be more aware of any changes in a person's actions and behavior that may be warnings that he or she is thinking about suicide. Individuals who are contemplating suicide may show a combination of warning signs that may include:

- Talking about feeling helpless, hopeless or having no purpose
- Talking about feeling overwhelmed, trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Use and misuse of alcohol, prescription medications and/or drugs
- Acting anxious, agitated or reckless
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing or isolating from others
- Giving away personal possessions
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Displaying extreme mood swings
- Talking about wanting to die or about not being afraid of dying
- Writing about personal pain and death



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- Having made a previous suicide attempt and/or making a plan to kill oneself

If someone you know shows these warning signs for suicide,

- Do not leave the person alone
- Remove any means/weapons that could be used in a suicide attempt
- Call for help, especially if you feel that you cannot provide the help that the person at risk needs

If you need immediate help, call 911 for emergency dispatch. For counseling and other intervention service needs, call:

- DMHSA 24-hour Crisis Hotline (671) 647-8833
- Sanctuary, Inc. 24-Hour Hotline (671) 475-7100
- 24-hour National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Toll-Free)  
1(800)273-TALK (8255)
- UOG Isa Psychological Center (671) 735-2883  
\*M-F, 9am – 5pm only

Those who have lost a loved one to suicide also need support and compassion. A Survivors Support Group meets every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month at the PEACE office in Hagatna, which is available to help survivors cope and heal from their loss.

For more information on services and resources regarding suicide prevention and intervention, contact the PEACE office at 477-9079 through 83 or 477-2301/3/4 or visit [www.peaceguam.org](http://www.peaceguam.org).

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*Bobbie S.N. Benavente is the supervisor of the Prevention and Training (P&T) Branch of the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse. The P&T Branch, PEACE office, offers trainings and resources on suicide prevention and early intervention.*



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